

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 were pending in the application. Claims 2, 4, 5, 15 and 18 have been amended. Claims 1 and 14 have been canceled. No claims have been added. Therefore, claims 2-13 and 15-22 are now pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application is requested for at least the reasons that follow.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgement of the Information Disclosure Statement filed October 9, 2003 and the claim for foreign priority.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 2-4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15-17, 19 and 20 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants have rewritten claims 2, 4 and 15 into independent form and amended claim 5 to depend on claim 4. Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 2, 4, and 15, and dependent claims 3, 5, 6, 7, 16 and 17 are now in condition for allowance.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 18, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,839,789 ("Koledin"). Applicants traverse the rejections for at least the foregoing reasons.

The rejection of claim 8 should be withdrawn at least because Koledin fails to disclose, teach, or suggest "wherein the torque limiting device is configured to prevent torque exerted on the shaft from exceeding a predetermined value," as recited in claim 8. The Office Action states that Koledin discloses a rotatable shaft (111) and a torque limiting device (109), which is configured to prevent torque exerted on the shaft from exceeding a predetermined value. *See* Office Action at p. 2. Applicants disagree. On the contrary, Koledin discloses a shaft (111) that *will* be subject to torque because only one end of the shaft (111) is prevented from rotating. *See* Koledin at Figs. 5 and 6. The worm gear (109) of Koledin only fixes one end of the shaft (111), but does not prevent the shaft (111) from twisting due to the force of the seat belt. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 9-13 depend from claim 8 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations set forth in these dependent claims.

Independent claim 18 discloses limitations similar to claim 8. For example, claim 18 recites "wherein the torque limiting device is configured to prevent torque exerted on the shaft from exceeding a predetermined value." Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 19-22 depend from claim 18 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations set forth in these dependent claims.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

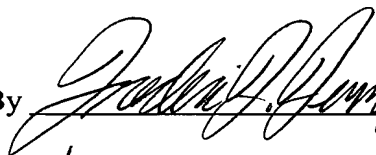
The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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